

# **MEDIA REVEALED**

## **Understanding our Media Diet**





This guide was developed by  
The Vermont Tobacco Control Program  
108 Cherry Street, PO Box 70  
Burlington, Vermont 05402  
[healthvermont.gov](http://healthvermont.gov)  
[tobaccovt@vdh.state.vt.us](mailto:tobaccovt@vdh.state.vt.us)

# Media Revealed

## Understanding our Media Diet



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# Introduction

## What is Media Literacy?

The commonly accepted definition explains media literacy as a process which includes, accessing, analyzing, evaluating and creating messages in a variety of forms. Media literacy education teaches students how to question media to develop these life skills. A critical examination reveals how media is created, how messages that are created are used for persuasion, how media influences how we feel about ourselves and the decisions we make and much more. Media literacy is a holistic model that is a sum of all the parts. For example, creating media alone is not complete in teaching media literacy anymore than teaching the alphabet is complete in teaching English, but it is an important step in becoming literate.



The aim of media literacy is to empower people to become active consumers of media by teaching them to critically "read" and question the influences that media has in their lives and the lives of their peers. How do you teach people to become more thoughtful regarding their media environment and effective in communication? Media literacy uses questions, inquiry, deconstruction and decoding to build skills to recognize both the subtleties and complexities of media.

## Why Media Literacy?

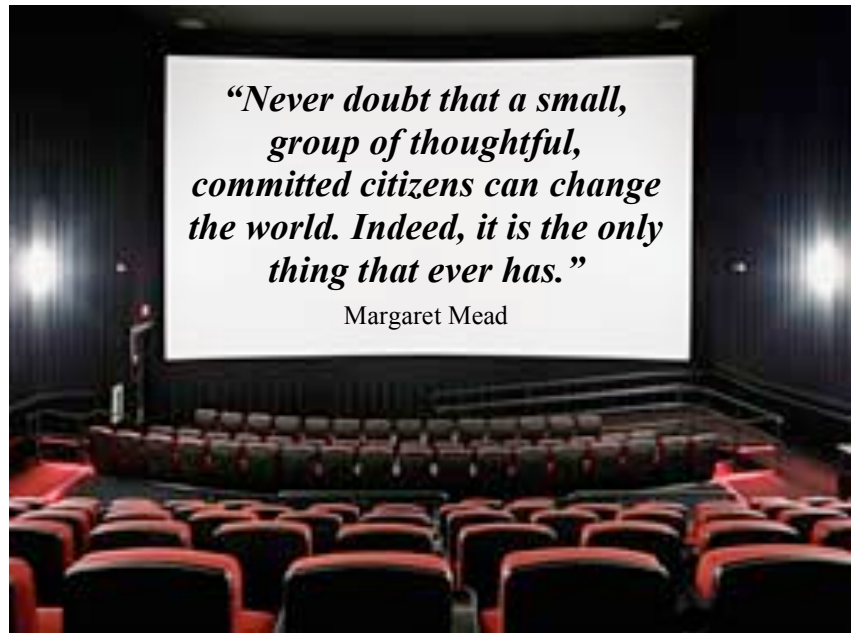
There are many reasons to offer and promote media literacy education. The following is a partial list of reasons to include media literacy education in school and community settings.

- Develop critical thinking skills-active instead of passive media habits
- Empower adolescents to make more informed decisions
- Challenge stereotypes and misperceptions
- Saturated media culture
- Give perspective and meaning to media habits
- Create greater awareness of influencers
- Artistic appreciation
- Health promotion
- Violence reduction

## Welcome – How to Use Media Revealed

Welcome to the Media Revealed guide, an evolving toolbox of resources where you can explore ways to integrate media literacy into a classroom, event, activity, and ultimately into everyday life. It is a compilation of numerous resources that the Department of Health has sifted through to help you easily and quickly begin to use media literacy concepts and activities in your community. Whether you are new to media literacy education or you are looking for fresh ideas, you will find a collection of ideas and tools that give you the freedom to tailor media literacy education for your needs, without having to expend resources.

The media literacy education field has seen huge growth in recent years, especially among educators and prevention advocates. Media Revealed is not intended to recreate media literacy education but instead to help you filter and navigate this fast growing and often murky field. Finding the time to research and gather materials can be difficult so we hope that this resource-rich kit will make your life a little easier by connecting you with valuable information, resources and ready-to-use materials.



### Media Revealed Objectives

- To connect community prevention organizations and educators with media literacy information, resources and activity ideas.
- Build local skills in order to develop a network of community-based media literacy consultants.

### Using the Guide

Using this guide you can become an active voice for media literacy in the community or classroom, committed to engaging others with concepts, activities, materials and dialogue about media education. Teaching media literacy to others can take many forms, and can be an exciting way to introduce new topics into a conversation. It doesn't require extra time in the classroom or community setting. Instead, it can be used as a process when introducing crossover topics like health prevention, English, civics, and history, for example.

This guide gives you the flexibility to spend as little as 5 minutes asking a few icebreaker questions, take an hour with a lesson plan, or plan for several days worth of activities. In any case, the benefit of including more “media literacy moments” into everyday life is that students of all ages become more informed and engaged in their world. Get familiar with the resources in this guide. It won’t take long to recognize the key questions and concepts because they are repeated and consistent throughout the resources.

The guide’s resources are organized into 4 sections, according to commonly held media literacy concepts. Each section includes an introduction and then lists a range of possible activities to approach the concept. Some activities are fully-prepared lesson plans, and others allow for customizing to your needs. Some lessons include recommended ages or grades.

*Students are encouraged to ask questions.* Because media literacy education is based on inquiry, the materials emphasize a teaching atmosphere where open questioning and conversation is expected.

### **Section Themes**

- **The Media Landscape**

Students learn to recognize the impact of their media habits, and those of their peers. They build awareness about media culture and learn the distinctions between media forms.

- **Retouching Reality**

Students focus on how media is constructed and the unique and creative techniques employed in different media.

- **Language of Persuasion**

Students learn to recognize the ways that media can influence behavior and attitude. They learn to “read” media for messages and uncover how messages are created to attract audiences.

- **Express Yourself**

Students create their own media using other previous lessons as a guide in the process.

*Note to Educators/Presenters: Please always preview media prior to showing to youth, in order to scan for inappropriate behavior.*

## Presenter Basics

### Media Literacy 101

Learning how to access, analyze, evaluate and create media isn't a one time thing, it is practiced throughout life and includes understanding how to gather information, read information, judge information sources for credibility, reflect on information, understand the creative techniques of different media forms, synthesize information and evaluate emerging technologies. It sounds like a lot, but once you begin to think about media differently you become naturally "tuned in" to the media world around you.

Because media and media messages change quickly and often, people of all ages need to stay savvy with their practice of media literacy skills. The resources below all offer solid explanations for those new to media literacy. You will begin to see the common themes repeated throughout each of these resources.

- The **Question Media** handout offers common concepts and questions and can be found in the appendix. This handout also includes an exercise that will be helpful for you and for youth.
- The *Alliance for a Media Literate America* (AMLA) has a comparison chart of Media Literacy definitions & Concepts under the navigation bar Media Literacy.  
<http://www.amlainfo.org/>
- The *Kaiser Family Foundation* offers a comprehensive overview, as well as key facts about media literacy.  
<http://www.kff.org/entmedia/upload/Key-Facts-Media-Literacy.pdf>
- **The Media Lit Kit** is an in-depth Teacher's/Leader's Orientation Guide from the *Center for Media Literacy*.  
[http://www.medialit.org/bp\\_mlk.html](http://www.medialit.org/bp_mlk.html)

## Working with Youth – Who is Your Audience?

While media literacy education is something that everyone can benefit from, like media itself these activities will be more successful if you can match your audience with their level of readiness for the message. For example, a 5 year-old will perceive their world much differently from a 10 or 17 year-old. Not only are there vast differences in their level of cognitive development, but in the amount of life experience. Teaching media literacy that is relevant to your audience's stage of development, as well as their geographic and social background, will be more effective...and more fun.

## Facts & Resources

- Teens are better able to understand situations from different points of view, than preteens. (*The Center on Media and Child Health*)
- Teens are “trying out” personalities and therefore may change their attitudes and behavior regarding particular topics. For example, the 10 year old who vowed to never smoke may decide to give it a try between 13-15 years of age. (Vermont Youth Research, Kelliher Samets Volk, 2001.)
- Be aware of disparities, and be sensitive to your audience if you are asking them to perform an activity that will reveal how much technology they or their family use. Many situations can influence access to and usage of media such as:
  - Lower socioeconomic status
  - Parents who work leaving their children alone at home
  - Dangerous neighborhoods or home situations
  - Colder climates, etc.(*The Center on Media and Child Health*)
- Get familiar and stay current with your audience's media habits:
  - What are their favorite television shows, frequently visited websites, books, magazines, films and video games?
  - Do they blog, instant message, have a profile on My Yearbook.com or another social networking site?
  - The *Center on Media and Child Health* offers many insights into youth and media habits. They have a blog that is updated regularly and follows youth attitudes, trends and research in an easy to read format. <http://cmch.typepad.com/>
- Review the Youth Media Diet Facts sheet located in the appendix.
- Review the Generation M: Media in the Lives of 8-18 Year-olds report from the Kaiser Family Foundation Study, March 2005.  
<http://www.kff.org/entmedia/7251.cfm>





## Media Landscape

Media has enormous power to influence our behavior and attitudes. We are influenced by the complex and subtle audio and visual language of media without realizing it. But before we can begin to understand and interpret media we must explore our media landscape. **Media mapping**, the examination of media in our environment, can help us create the foundation for media literacy education. Students may not be aware of the vast amount of media and messages that surround them on a daily basis from the radio that wakes them in the morning, the TV on in the background while they eat, signs they pass (or billboards in other states), flyers, posters, T-shirt logos, celebrity endorsements and the list could go on. Mapping media activities call for students to become cultural investigators and to track media habits and **media messages**.

### Benefits

- Introduce basic communication vocabulary.
- Gain understanding of personal media habits.
- Recognize the different types of media and media messages: to persuade, inform or entertain.
- Recognize patterns for alcohol, tobacco and food messages.
- Develop/ Improve skills to access and gather a variety of information sources.

### Materials

- “Product Placement Log” (in the appendix)
- “Youth Media Diet Fact Sheet” (in the appendix)
- Video Camera/ Digital camera (optional)
- Computer (optional)
- Internet access (optional)

### Icebreakers

- Open by asking questions about media tastes. Ask for specific likes and dislikes.
  - Which Television shows do you like?
  - What are some of your favorite movies?
  - What movies have you watched over again?
  - What are your favorite video games, magazines and books?
  - When do you listen to music? What radio stations do you like?
  - Which websites do you frequent?
  - Do you have a profile on MyYearbook.com or My Space?
  - Do you blog?
  - How often do you IM (Instant message)?
- Have students look over the Youth Media Diet Facts sheet and begin asking questions regarding media habits and facts from the handout
  - How do you multitask?
  - What fact caught your attention? Why?

## MAPPING MEDIA HABITS

### Overview

What's your media diet? How much media do you consume daily? These activities draw student awareness to the type and amount of media that is consumed daily. It can be an interesting way to start a media literacy lesson and conversation about media habits. It helps create understanding of the overall impact that media play in our lives, by asking students to take inventory of their personal media landscape over the course of a day, week or longer. Media mapping is an exciting way for teachers to engage their students in pop culture, a subject that youth are already intimately connected to.

### Activity Ideas

#### **Media Use Lesson Plan (Ages 14+)**

The *Center on Media and Child Health* presents a plan with the flexibility to be used as a stand-alone step-by-step activity guide over the course of several meetings or classes or for ideas to direct shorter lessons. The activities, in part, build on the Kaiser Family Foundation Report *Generation M: Media in the Lives of 8-18 Year Olds*. The report is referenced in this lesson and can also be found in the appendix.

[http://www.cmch.tv/mentors\\_teachers/lp\\_media\\_use.asp](http://www.cmch.tv/mentors_teachers/lp_media_use.asp)

#### **Are You Plugged In? (Ages 9-12)**

This is an extension activity for mapping media habits, from *PBS*. Students map their TV habits for a week. The plan, found at the web link below includes a TV Diary and a letter to parents. This site is geared to younger youth.

<http://pbskids.org/dontbuyit/teachersguide/areyoupluggedin.html>

- **Create a Media Diary** as a more comprehensive addition or alternative to the PBS lesson plan. The *PBS* lesson builds awareness for media habits, with a handout that asks students to track only TV viewing habits.
- As an alternative ask students to track all media habits for one day. As a class agree on categories like computer, TV, video games, music, MP3 players, telephone, movies, etc. Decide on specifics like time spent Instant messaging, using the computer for homework or Internet, listening to music, etc. After the categories have been decided ask students to keep track, in a notebook, of all their media usage for one day. Some questions for a follow-up discussion might include:
  - How do your media habits compare with those of your peers?
  - How much time did you spend on each of the categories?
  - Do you think you could give up the media where you spent the most time?
  - For one day? Why? Or, Why not?

#### **The Video Diaries: The Multitasking Generation (Ages 12+)**

Multitasking among youth has become a hot topic in recent year's, so The Kaiser Family Foundation held a forum to explore its implications. A video was created as a companion to the forum held and is a great way to open a conversation about multitasking media habits. The video shows youth discussing multitasking. You can watch the short video online at the following link under "related video" You will also find reports and facts sheets to support your discussion.

<http://www.kff.org/entmedia/entmedia121206pkg.cfm>

- **After viewing the Multitasking Generation Video Diaries** ask students to work in groups to consider the pros and cons of multitasking. Do students multitask differently at school or home? What are the views of their parents or teachers?

### **Operation Storefront (Ages 10-13)**

Vermont Kids Against Tobacco (VKAT) groups routinely conduct convenience store surveys of tobacco products and marketing strategies as a way to increase community awareness. This is about mapping a specific location for tobacco messages. The complete activity guide is found at <http://www.goVKAT.org>

## **MAPPING THE MESSAGE**

### **Overview**

What are the messages that are communicated through the media we use? When the media we use becomes part of our culture we can often overlook the messages that are embedded within them. Messages all have a purpose whether to inform, persuade or entertain us. Through the mapping of messages, students become more consciously aware of the amount of messaging they receive each day about topics like tobacco, alcohol drugs and food. In later media literacy sections students learn to question and interpret the message. But first, students need to develop awareness of messages by spotting visual cues that carry a message, like signs, symbols and logos.

### **Activity Ideas**

#### **Create an Image Diary (All ages)**

Have students take a visual survey for a day or longer of as many symbols, signs and logos in their environment. They can decide to take photos, draw, tear from magazines or come up with their own unique visual aid.

A discussion can follow about the image diary they created asking:

- Where the images came from and why they chose the ones they did to represent their diary?
- Were students attracted to particular symbols or logos? For example, an athletic person may take notice of sports logos more readily than others not engaged in sports activities.
- How many of the images came from food, alcohol or tobacco?

#### **Create a Slogan Diary (All ages)**

Start by explaining the definition for a slogan as a group of words that connect a product and hopefully help to sell that product. Think of examples as a class. Some might include Nike's "Just Do It," Mountain Dew's "Do the Dew" or, "They're Great" from Kellogg's Frosted Flakes. Ask the students to keep a slogan diary for a day or longer.

#### **Track Ad Types – Choose Alcohol, Tobacco or Food Ads (Ages 10+)**

Ask students to track all ads they see or hear for a certain length of time. There are numerous ways to do this activity. For example, have students look within a radius of their home, look for beer ads only, count how many food ads are for fast foods or fruits and vegetables, etc. Have students work together to create a visual graph of their findings.

- **Media Sharp Handout** (Ages 14+)  
Try using the mapping handout from the CDC's Media Sharp curriculum for a more involved activity that will require a discussion about how advertisers attract the consumers' attention.  
[www.accessexcellence.org/HE/CDC/mediasharp/pdf\\_files/MODULE5H.pdf](http://www.accessexcellence.org/HE/CDC/mediasharp/pdf_files/MODULE5H.pdf)

### **Brand Logo Alphabet** (All ages)

This is a short Power Point exercise (which can be printed out in color) that is a powerful reminder of the impact of brand logos and the influences symbols play in our advertising culture. Have students name the trees and plants pictured on the first slide then move to the slide with letters that represent popular brands and again name as many as possible. Answers for the trees and plants are in the Power Point. Brand logo answers are below.

- Brand Logo Power Point Presentation  
[http://www.stayfreemagazine.org/ml/slides/course\\_intro.ppt](http://www.stayfreemagazine.org/ml/slides/course_intro.ppt)
- Brand Log Alphabet Answer  
<http://www.stayfreemagazine.org/ml/answers.html>

### **More Activities**

- **Count the number of celebrity endorsements** you see while watching TV or in the magazines you read.
- **Evaluate social networking sites** and count the number of Ads that pop up.
- **Count the number of ads** you see around your neighborhood, which might include; signs, flyers, logos on hats and clothing, radio, TV, convenience store signs, vehicles, sidewalk or chalk ads, car, bus ads, etc. What are the newest places to find ad space?
- **Use the Product Placement Log handout** (found in the appendix) and count the number of times you view tobacco smoking or products in a movie or on TV. Or, cross out tobacco and use the log to track alcohol or beer or drug use.
- Ask students to **create a collage** of the ways that they use media to document and store memories and experiences from their lives. (MySpace, journals, photographs, home videos, letters, video blogs, etc.) Have them choose a fitting title.

### **Resources**

- Media Multitasking Among American Youth: Prevalence, Predictors and Pairings  
<http://www.kff.org/entmedia/7593.cfm>
- Generation M: Media in the Lives of 8-18 Year-olds  
A Kaiser Family Foundation Study, March 2005  
<http://www.kff.org/entmedia/7251.cfm>



## Retouching Reality

All media is constructed by using specific creative techniques like music, lighting, camera angles and special effects, that are used to bring out an emotional response such as anger, love, longing, concern, excitement, etc. In these activities students are given tools to start analyzing and evaluating how and why media is constructed, as well as who is constructing it. By understanding how media messages are developed students can begin questioning what information was left out.

### Benefits

- Learn specific skills for critical viewing of media
- Distinguish between messages that inform, sell and entertain
- Recognize bias and subjectivity inherent in media
- Awareness of creative techniques used in media

### Icebreaker – What are we Watching?

Ask students about the differences between the construction of a movie, TV show, magazine Ad or TV Ad.

- How can we tell what we are watching? (Movie, TV show, commercial, etc?)
- What is the genre? (Drama, action, romance, comedy, animation, game show, reality show, variety show, musical, etc.)
- What kind of message is being relayed? Is the message there on purpose, like in a commercial? Are there “hidden” messages?
- Think about length, pacing, camera angles, equipment used like still photography cameras, printed words, humor, (laugh tracks) rhythm and special effects. How do these methods make the viewer react?

## DECONSTRUCTION

### Overview

Helping students learn to dissect or deconstruct media and its messages will empower them to be active and thoughtful media consumers. Media becomes less of something that happens to them and more of an active choice of involvement. Learning these skills will aid future activities that involve creative expression.

Deconstruction activities teach a set of questions to ask as a way to explore media. Emphasis is on core questions like:

- How is media constructed?
- What creative techniques are used to attract my attention?
- Who created the message?

Although, any form of media and message can be examined using the set of key questions, most of the following activity ideas will focus on alcohol, tobacco, drug and food messages, because the ways in which we interpret these messages can affect our health and quality of life.

## Materials

- Question Media handout (in the appendix)
- Computer
- Samples from Print or TV Ads (links provided in this section and in appendix)

## Activity Ideas

### How to Conduct a “Close Analysis” of a Media ‘Text’

The *Center for Media Literacy* walks you through deconstructing a media text, like a commercial. They refer to their method of analyzing media as “Close Analysis.” The site includes step-by-step instructions on how to explore visuals, sounds, and the key questions to critically analyze media. Links to handouts and other resources are included.

[http://www.medialit.org/reading\\_room/article570.html](http://www.medialit.org/reading_room/article570.html)

### Deconstruct an Alcohol Ad

The *Media Education Foundation* explains in a step-by-step format how to analyze an alcohol advertisement. This is very thorough, and provides an educator with many questions to help direct a discussion. The Foundation’s site also includes downloadable handouts and exercises.

<http://www.mediaed.org/handouts/pdfs/DeconstructingAnAlcoholAd.pdf>

### New Mexico Media Literacy Project (NMMLP)

NMMLP offers an explanation on deconstruction and includes a specific list of questions to guide the process. They also have a sample deconstruction gallery (see link below) that will help build confidence in deconstructing media using the process they have outlined.

[http://www.nmmlp.org/media\\_literacy/pdfs/deconstructing\\_media.pdf](http://www.nmmlp.org/media_literacy/pdfs/deconstructing_media.pdf)

- New Mexico Media Literacy Project Deconstruction Gallery  
[http://www.nmmlp.org/media\\_literacy/deconstruction\\_gallery.html](http://www.nmmlp.org/media_literacy/deconstruction_gallery.html)

### Question Media

This easy to follow one page handout, includes brief descriptions of how media is created, along with basic questions students can ask to deconstruct the media they consumer. (See appendix)

## Deconstruction Activities by Theme

- **“Some Things Just Aren’t What They Seem”**

Media and the messages conveyed within create false impressions that influence our thinking and behaviors. Using Dove’s “Campaign for Real Beauty” short video, students are introduced to the creative techniques used in media messages, which can have an influence on perception and behavior. In the same way that media can alter our perceptions of reality, the illusions around teen smoking can promote the misperception that most Vermont high school students smoke, compared with the reality that 8 out of 10 Vermont teens don’t smoke. This lesson plan makes the link between perceptions and behavior.

*Note to Presenters/Educators: A complete lesson plan including discussion questions can be found in the Appendix at the end of this guide.*

- **Candy Flavored Cigarettes**

*Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids* presents the background information for this topic along with a gallery of candy flavored cigarette print ads to deconstruct. In addition to deconstructing, you might consider working with students to explore how these ads could attract youth. What about the ads might appeal to children especially? (Colors, words, shapes, style, etc.)

<http://tobaccofreekids.org/reports/targeting/>

- **Gender and Cigarette Advertising/Camel No. 9**

R.J. Reynolds launched Camel No. 9, a specific marketing campaign targeted towards women. The *Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids* has written a special report on the Camel No. 9 campaign and gives visual examples to download. Students can consider what creative techniques are used to lead a viewer to conclude women are the target audience?

<http://tobaccofreekids.org/reports/women/>

- Additional Camel No. 9 Ads (3 views from the same campaign)  
<http://www.trinketsandtrash.org/tearsheet.asp?ItemNum=211950>  
<http://www.trinketsandtrash.org/tearsheet.asp?ItemNum=211883>  
<http://www.trinketsandtrash.org/tearsheet.asp?ItemNum=211961>

- **The Reality of Health**

Reality television has become the norm, but is it truly a reflection of reality? Many health reality shows are broadcast, but is the information accurate? Even “reality” shows are constructed. Using this activity students learn to deconstruct reality television for health specific topics. How do negative and positive consequences regarding health get portrayed on reality TV? How might reality shows not accurately portray the reality about health? Using the Kaiser Family Foundation and their forum on The Reality of Health as a starting point, host your own classroom forum on health in the Media. First, become familiar with the web cast and report below. They are lengthy but raise engaging questions and background for you to direct a classroom discussion.

- Watch the web cast by the Kaiser Family Foundation on the “Reality of Health”  
<http://www.kff.org/entmedia/entmedia101806pkg.cfm>
- The “Reality” of Health: Reality Television and the Public Health Report  
Kaiser Family Foundation, October 2006  
<http://www.kff.org/entmedia/upload/7567.pdf>

Activity Idea

Pick one or more of the shows mentioned in the web cast; Honey We’re Killing the Kids, Intervention, The Real World, Cold Turkey, Dr. 90210, Mystery Diagnosis, The Biggest Loser, Untold Stories of the ER, etc., to examine and introduce the topic of reality health television. Have students debate the following questions (which are taken from questions raised in the Kaiser Family Foundation October, 2006 web cast forum) as your guide in leading a discussion:

- Is reality TV reality? Why? Why not?
- What messages are these shows communicating to viewers? (Physical attractiveness, personal responsibility, relationships, etc.)
- What are the differences between entertainment shows like ER and Chicago Hope and the reality program you viewed in preparation for this discussion?

- What messages are not being told in the program you viewed? (Cost, accessibility to healthcare, success rates, etc.)
- Are both the positive and negative consequences highlighted in the reality programs you viewed? For example, MTV's *Real World* often shows the cast members binge drinking and smoking, but rarely addresses the health consequences of these actions. Compared to *Intervention*, a show about the devastating results of drug abuse shows the audience what the physical consequences of abuse look like.
- What are the differences between the ways in which reality TV and news programs illustrate health information?
- Should health organizations work with reality programs to get accurate messages out to the public?

(Note: this activity could become a larger community forum, by asking students to invite parents, health educators, local physicians or others to an open discussion on the implications of health in the media.)

- **Super Bowl Advertising**

Super Bowl commercials have become famous for their humor, high costs (over \$2 Million for 30 seconds of air time), as well as number of beer ads. Students can analyze these ads any time of the year by downloading clips from Advertising Avenue.

- *Advertising Avenue* has Super Bowl ads from past years that are searchable by year or by type of ad, including beer.  
<http://www.advertisementave.com/>

- **“Tackling the Beer Barons”**

The *Action Coalition for Media Education* (ACME) creates free monthly media literacy lessons. This one critically examines the beer commercials shown during the Super Bowl. You can find the links to PDF versions of the lesson plan and student log. Advertising Avenue has past Super Bowl commercials you can download to do this lesson any time of the year.

- [http://www.acmecoalition.org/tackling\\_beer\\_barons\\_0](http://www.acmecoalition.org/tackling_beer_barons_0)
- Advertising Avenue  
<http://www.advertisementave.com/>

### Links to Ads

- Print Ads  
<http://tobaccofreekids.org/adgallery/>  
<http://www.trinketsandtrash.org/>  
[http://www.nmmlp.org/media\\_literacy/deconstruction\\_gallery.html](http://www.nmmlp.org/media_literacy/deconstruction_gallery.html)
- TV Commercials  
<http://www.advertisementave.com/>
- Alcohol Advertising  
<http://camy.org/gallery/>
- Ask students to bring in examples from a magazine or newspaper on specific subjects like tobacco, alcohol, drugs, food or clothing.

### Resources



- **Center for Media Literacy Media Lit Kit**  
Copyright 2002, *Center for Media Literacy*  
[www.medialit.org](http://www.medialit.org)
- **Center for Media Literacy-Explanation of Key Concept #2**  
“Media messages are constructed using a creative language with its own rules”  
[http://www.medialit.org/pdf/mlk/14B\\_CCKQPoster+5essays.pdf](http://www.medialit.org/pdf/mlk/14B_CCKQPoster+5essays.pdf)



# The Language of Persuasion

A media message is created with the intention to convey a particular value, point of view and purpose. The purpose of a message is to influence an audience or consumer to accept and identify with a viewpoint. Remember, the main purpose of media is to inform, persuade, entertain and sell, but those lines are often blurred. Advertisers use definite strategies to attract an audience to their products. A few persuasion techniques may include: celebrity endorsements, flattery, message repetition, humor, logos, music, lifestyle, selective editing, expert testimonials, beauty, wealth, success, and independence. The activities below will help students evaluate the strategies and messages that media contains

## Benefits

- Identify and define personal values
- Promote cultural sensitivity
- Be more informed about reality versus advertising
- Challenge tobacco and alcohol industry motivation and manipulation
- Recognize persuasive strategies used in media

## Icebreaker – Who’s the Target?

Different Ads target different groups just like movies or TV shows. They can include people of a certain age group, gender, marital status, profession, wealth, ethnicity, similar interests or hobbies, etc. (For example, teenagers, seniors, females, single people, moms, sports enthusiasts, smokers, etc.) Introduce the term **Target Audience** and create a list of examples. Ask students to give examples of existing products and their ads and decide who the intended or target audience is, and the main message.

## EXPERIENCING MESSAGES

### Overview

People experience messages differently. How a message is interpreted depends on the unique qualities of an individual. A person’s age, education, memories and values can all influence one’s experience of a message. In point-of-view activities students build awareness for the impact that different messages have by questioning and decoding the values fixed in a message. Students will reflect on their own culture, familial and personal beliefs and values, lifestyles, interests and experiences. They also explore how different people may react in a different way to the same message. Media literacy education is not intended to insulate or separate people from their media but instead teach them how to find their voices among the noise of messages in our media saturated culture.

### Materials

- Question Media handout (in the appendix)
- Values List handout (in the appendix)
- Computer
- Magazine ad samples
- DVD/VHS Player (some activities)

## **Activity Ideas**

### **“Merchants of Cool”: The Art of Teen Marketing Pod casts**

This 53-minute PBS *Frontline* documentary examines the world of popular culture and its number one target, teens. It can be viewed as a group or given as homework, if students have access to a computer. Understanding how to market to teens has become big business and this documentary provides a behind the scenes look at the techniques and lengths that companies will go to attract a teen audience. It is divided into segments like “Hunting for Cool,” that can stand as individual lessons (see Cost of Cool) or watched in full. The *Frontline* Merchants of Cool link is below.

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/cool/view/>

### **Cost of Cool Lesson Plan from PBS “Don’t Buy It:” Get Media Smart (Grades 3-5)**

The Cost of Cool is a lesson plan from PBS that corresponds to their media literacy website “Don’t Buy It” and The Merchants of cool segment (mentioned above) titled “Hunting for Cool.” It offers an engaging lesson on how media can influence behavior.

- Cost of Cool Lesson Plan  
<http://pbskids.org/dontbuyit/teachersguide/costofcool.html>
- Cost of Cool Game  
<http://pbskids.org/dontbuyit/buyingsmart/costofcool.html>

### **Create a Popstar: Lesson from PBS “Don’t Buy It:” Get Media Smart (Grades 3-5)**

This is a complete lesson that ultimately asks the question, are we a celebrity-obsessed culture? By becoming a Popstar manager, students have fun while exploring how music and celebrity endorsements are used as strategies to sell a product. Students develop awareness of how music and celebrities have influenced their consumer habits.

- Create a Popstar Teacher’s Lesson Plan  
<http://pbskids.org/dontbuyit/teachersguide/popstar.html>

### **“The Persuaders” (Grades 9-12)**

Media messages are constructed by teams of people. This program from PBS’s *Frontline*, sheds light on the numerous people involved in creating messages and highlights the strategies and lengths they will go, to gain the attention of consumers. The program can be viewed online segments or as a whole. DVD or VHS versions can be purchased. A teacher’s guide provides an introduction, lesson plans and ideas and discussion topics.

- Persuaders Home web page  
<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/persuaders/>
- Persuaders Teachers Center – “Primarily for classes in U.S. History or Government / Civics. Also of interest to people teaching Economics, Business, Marketing, Ethics, or Media Literacy.”  
<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/teach/persuaders/>

## Teens and Alcohol Marketing

The *Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth* at Georgetown University tracks youth exposure to alcohol ads on TV. In a December 20, 2006 press release, the center highlighted their research of the trend towards increased spending for alcohol ads and more youth exposure to those ads. This discussion topic could provide for as lively class dialogue among teens. First have students read the press release, fact sheets and view sample alcohol ads

Some questions to start a conversation may include:

- Do students feel they are targeted by alcohol marketing?
  - In what ways might alcohol ads attract the attention of the customer to buy their product?
  - Do ads appeal to those under 21? Why or why not?
  - What part of the story is typically not being told in an alcohol ad?
  - Do companies have a responsibility to highlight negatives consequences of drinking?
- 
- Press Release: More Alcohol on Advertising and Under Age Youth Are Seeing It  
<http://camy.org/press/release.php?ReleaseID=38>
  - Burlington-Plattsburgh Alcohol Advertising on TV – 2005 Data  
<http://camy.org/tvtool2005/index.php?MarketID=523>
  - Alcohol Marketing Gallery Sample Ads  
<http://camy.org/gallery/>

## Analyzing Media Influences DVD (*Discovery School*, 30 min. 2006)

This DVD offers a current look at how advertising can manipulate teen's perception. The DVD offers numerous media examples and presents viewers with ways to sift through messages to make healthy decisions.

A companion teacher's guide is available online and offers suggestions for leading discussion and activities. The media literacy focus is on health and specifically body image and food advertising. Unlike many lessons and activities around media influences this DVD and companion teaching guide found at the link below, offer concrete and empowering solutions.

<http://school.discoveryeducation.com/>

- Teacher Guide: Skills For healthy Living – Analyzing Media Influences  
For health-related classes, grades 9-12, 2 class periods.  
[http://school.discoveryeducation.com/teachersguides/pdf/health/ds/SHL\\_analyzing\\_media\\_influences.pdf](http://school.discoveryeducation.com/teachersguides/pdf/health/ds/SHL_analyzing_media_influences.pdf)
- To request the DVD (2 week loan) e-mail request to [tobacco@vdh.state.vt.us](mailto:tobacco@vdh.state.vt.us)

## Persuasion Techniques

Deconstructing media activities help students identify the strategies used to get a message across. Messages are expressed as values or ideals and can be positive or negative. What are your values? Are they the similar to the ones communicated in an ad that caught your eye? What motivates you to buy something?

- The *New Mexico Media Literacy Project* has examples of persuasion techniques used by advertisers. Their list is extensive but, can the class think of other examples? Have students think of personal examples of a few practices listed.

[http://www.nmmlp.org/media\\_literacy/language\\_persuasion.html](http://www.nmmlp.org/media_literacy/language_persuasion.html)

## What are Values?

Begin by defining the term value as an idea or attitude that is important and worthwhile to a person, organization, group, society, culture, etc. Then ask students to find values that describe themselves from the Values handout (in the appendix) and briefly share their choices. To expand this activity, students can look at an ad and using the handout circle which values they believe are being conveyed by the ad. Discussion to follow can include whether the ads hold similar values with their own and what that means as a consumer?

## Defining Personality

Gather sample ads to review. Students can bring their favorite ads, or you can use the resource links for print ads below. Ask students to start a list of some ways that print advertisements or TV commercials “catch” their attention. Explain that the visual elements in advertisements carry messages that are like personalities, the visible part of someone’s character. They are intended to attract consumers to their products. Have students think about how a friend would describe their personality (fun, energetic, silly, confident, cool, etc.) and then ask them to consider the personality of sample ads. Write the personality traits for each ad and compare and discuss.

- The Media Awareness Network explains Beer commercials as selling a particular personality. See some of their examples here:

[http://www.mediaawareness.ca/english/resources/educational/overheads/alcohol/beer\\_study.cfm](http://www.mediaawareness.ca/english/resources/educational/overheads/alcohol/beer_study.cfm)

- More Print ads – <http://camy.org/gallery/>

## Word Association Game

Write down the word Beer or Cigarettes on a board or large piece of paper and ask students for words and expressions that come to mind. Follow with these questions:

- Where do we get messages about alcohol or tobacco?
- Who are the people and the organizations trying to influence attitudes about drinking?
- What is the point-of-view or message from each listed?
- Map out categories like School, Friends, Movies, Family, Advertising, Community groups, Public Service Announcements (PSA’s), etc. For example, “Don’t drink and Drive” is a common message we hear from PSA’s and community groups like MADD or SAD. Glamorization of smoking or drinking is a common message seen in movies, etc.

This is adapted from an exercise in a *Media Awareness Network* lesson titled Kids, Alcohol and Advertising. Full lesson plan and resources can be found at [http://www.media-awareness.ca/english/resources/educational/lessons/elementary/alcohol/messages\\_about\\_drinking.cfm](http://www.media-awareness.ca/english/resources/educational/lessons/elementary/alcohol/messages_about_drinking.cfm)

## Links to Ads

- Print Ads  
<http://tobaccofreekids.org/adgallery/>  
<http://www.trinketsandtrash.org/>  
[http://www.nmmlp.org/media\\_literacy/deconstruction\\_gallery.html](http://www.nmmlp.org/media_literacy/deconstruction_gallery.html)
- TV Commercials  
<http://www.advertisementave.com/>
- Alcohol Advertising  
<http://camy.org/gallery/>
- Ask students to bring in examples from a magazine or newspaper on specific subjects like tobacco, alcohol, drugs, food or clothing.

## SMOKING IN THE MOVIES

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### Overview

In recent years, companies have turned to movies and TV shows as new outlets to advertise products. It's called product placement and it has blurred the line between reality and advertising. Some movies seem more like a commercial with brand-name things like shoes, cars, coffee, or jewelry shown throughout the film. Although these products, when placed well, seem natural and send messages that create a desire, they seldom affect our health, just our wallet. Seeing smoking and tobacco or alcohol products in the movies and TV however, can be harmful. More than a thousand young people try smoking every day because of seeing smoking in the movies. These activities shed light on the tobacco industry's manipulation of messages that make smoking look normal and glamorous. And, alcohol advertising that attract youth attention can encourage drinking and jeopardize health according to the *Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth*.

### Materials

- Computer / LCD Projector (optional)
- Media Revealed: This is Product Placement Guide
- This is Product Placement Log handout (in the appendix)

### Icebreaker – 120,000 Lives DVD or Pod cast

This video provides an introduction to the problem of smoking in the movies. In only 9 minutes you get the history and issues around smoking in the movies. Done in an edgy style with plenty of facts as well as ways for youth to get involved and call to action, it is sure to get the discussion started. The video can be downloaded from

[http://smokefreemovies.ucsf.edu/actnow/organizing\\_tools.html](http://smokefreemovies.ucsf.edu/actnow/organizing_tools.html)

## **Activity Ideas**

### **Media Revealed: This is Product Placement**

The Vermont Department of Health created this media literacy guide to support the 2007 statewide youth smoking prevention and empowerment campaign called “Butts of Hollywood.” This guide, and the campaign as a whole, aims to counter the powerful pro-tobacco influences that are regularly seen on the big screen by educating teens about the issue of smoking in the movies, and more specifically tobacco product placement. Students learn about product placement first-hand with **OVX Studios** at [OVX.org](http://OVX.org), where they will be introduced to product placement and get to try their skills as a director. The Product Placement log, which is also part of the larger guide, is in the appendix.

Available in PDF (or printed) format by e-mailing [tobaccovt@vdh.state.vt.us](mailto:tobaccovt@vdh.state.vt.us)

### **OVX Studios**

Students create their own fun animated movies using an easy interactive tool that can be found by going to [www.OVX.org](http://www.OVX.org). Students get to decide which characters fit the story lines best, which scenes work to tell the story, as well as which products (if any) will make it into their movie. **OVX Studios** will give an audience rating and a humorous movie critique.

### **“Something Stinks in Hollywood” DVD (2005)**

This is a very usable classroom or community resource created by Smoke Free Movies and The New Mexico Media Literacy Project. Something Stinks in Hollywood is a thoughtful and eye opening look into smoking in the movies and the tobacco industry and Hollywood’s involvement and responsibility. Quoted from the Smoke-Free Movies web site: “Menu-driven DVD includes fifty smoking scenes from recent movies organized by theme; printable discussion guide; background information about smoking in movies and its impact; and ideas students can use to end smoking in youth-rated movies. Designed for the classroom, movie samples and graphic charts are provocative for any audience exploring the power of tobacco imagery”

To request the DVD (2 week loan) e-mail to [tobaccovt@vdh.state.vt.us](mailto:tobaccovt@vdh.state.vt.us)

## **Resources**

- **New Mexico Media Literacy Project**  
<http://smokefreemovies.ucsf.edu/>
- **The Center for Media Literacy**  
<http://www.medialit.org>
- **Smoke Free Movies**  
<http://smokefreemovies.ucsf.edu/>
- **The Media Awareness Network**  
<http://www.media-awareness.ca/english/index.cfm>
- **Understanding the Impact of Media on Children and Teens**  
American Academy of Pediatrics  
<http://www.aap.org/family/mediainimpact.htm>
- **The Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth**  
<http://camy.org/>



## Express Yourself

It has become increasingly vital for students to understand how to navigate the media landscape not only from the perspective of how and why media is constructed, but also as an opportunity for personal expression. Students challenge and reinforce their understanding and appreciation for how media is constructed when they engage in the experience of producing media. They learn about the creative process from beginning to end first-hand. Expressing yourself can take many forms such as, conducting an interview, writing a play or an investigative article for the school newspaper, taking photographs, creating a counter-ad or creating a blog or website. There are many media avenues to explore, and gestures don't need to be grand to inspire students to participate in the media making process.

### Benefits

- Increase familiarity of ways to express personal point of view through different mediums
- Become engaged in producing media
- Increase skills to articulate and organize thoughts
- Create learning opportunities beyond the classroom

### Overview

Producing media alone is like viewing a video in class without questioning what is shown. However, creative media activities can be an exciting part of the process of understanding media and media messages. The following activities ask students to put into practice everything they've learned in previous activities about how and why media is constructed. The questioning of media continues throughout these activities in order for students to become more effective communicators. Students learn how to successfully make their ideas real with hands on participation. They also learn about parody, irony and stereotypes in creating media like counter ads.

### Materials

- Magazines
- Scissors, paper, glue, crayons, colored pencils, markers, etc.
- Computer
- Camera (digital, phone, disposable)
- Photos
- Video camera (optional)
- Creative Brief (in the appendix)



## Icebreakers

- **Spoof Ads**

Show a few examples for tobacco, alcohol or food advertising spoof ads. Explain a spoof as a humorous and mocking imitation of something like an ad. It is one way to deliver a counter-ad. Not all counter-ads are created to be funny but, a spoof is one way to grab someone's attention. Ask students what are the ads spoofing? What is the message?

<http://adbusters.org/spoofads/tobacco/>

<http://adbusters.org/spoofads/alcohol/>

<http://adbusters.org/spoofads/food/>

- **Opinions**

What do students think about the following research?

- "Data from more than 51,000 students in the 75 largest U.S. media markets found anti-tobacco advertising prevents kids from smoking and changes their attitudes toward tobacco." (Source: July 2005, Archives of Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine)
- "Research finds that showing anti-tobacco ads before movies works to counteract the pro-tobacco influence smoking in the movies has on young audiences." (Source: Smoke Free Movies [http://smokefreemovies.ucsf.edu/solution/anti\\_tobacco\\_ads.html](http://smokefreemovies.ucsf.edu/solution/anti_tobacco_ads.html))

## Activity Ideas

### Photo Storyboard

Ask students to use 4 to 6 photos in sequence to tell a story. This activity teaches students how to create a storyboard – a panel of images used to depict the changes of action and scene. Storyboards are a useful planning and editing tool in advertising, TV and movies, because they help clarify how visual images will convey a message and story. How can composition change a story? Focus on a subject like vacation, sports, school, etc. to help students with a direction. Play with the idea of editing by changing the order of the photos. Does a change in sequence tell a different story? Students learn to identify how perceptions can be manipulated by the editing process.

### Photography Adventures: Seeing Beyond Sight

This online artistic and social project offers a unique and challenging idea for an activity. They ask students to step out of their comfort zone and take photos of the things they notice while blindfolded. 70% of communication occurs visually through facial expression, body language and gestures and only 7% verbally. So what happens when we lose visual ability? This is an activity that will really explore the influence of visual cues and how we rely on them even if when we are unaware that we do so. It will also help students to develop more awareness for the sounds that often blend into a background. A great lesson to articulate is how we are affected by what we see and hear even when it isn't apparent. Students evaluate their point of view, from their experiences and beliefs.

- Seeing Beyond Sight Activity  
<http://sf0.org/seeingbeyondsight>
- Communication Handout – Supplement the above activity with a handout from [www.govkat.org](http://www.govkat.org) that explains communication.  
<http://www.govkat.org/assets/downloads/Communication.pdf>

### Create a “Counter” Print Ad

Counter-ads take an honest (and sometimes humorous) look at the messages of existing advertising, usually tobacco, alcohol or food ads, and seek to tell the story that’s not being said in the original ad. They represent a more accurate look at the products advertised.

First, have students look through magazines for ads that don’t tell the whole story. Choose tobacco, alcohol or food ads. Next, ask students to list all the real truth not reflected in the ad. For example:

- What is the ad not saying? Are there any consequences the ad is not telling you?
  - Do smoking ads tell you the economic cost of smoking? That smoking causes wrinkles, emphysema or bad breathe?
  - Do alcohol ads show the risky behaviors you might take part in that you wouldn’t do when sober?
  - Do ads for high fat foods show overweight people?
  - In the counter ad you create, put the reality into the image or words.
- 
- To discover real facts about smoking and drinking to use in your counter ads check out the following fact sheets:  
[http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data\\_statistics/Factsheets/index.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/Factsheets/index.htm)
  - Adbusters gives a step-by-step process for how to create ads. It is a good introduction to the advertising process as well as some general vocabulary terms. Also available to help prepare for advertising development is the Creative Brief (in the appendix).  
<http://adbusters.org/spoofads/printad/>



## Resources: Web Links

Articles & Reports.....	1A
Copyright Information.....	2A
Definitions .....	2A
Downloadable Advertisements.....	2A
Media Literacy Information .....	3A
Online Video/Pod casts .....	4A
Research & Fact Sheets.....	5A
Teaching Resources .....	5A
Tobacco-Related Information.....	6A
Vermont Sites .....	7A

### ARTICLES & REPORTS

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#### **The Virtual Generation, Jo Chandler**

**From The Age, August 14, 2007**

This short article can get a class talking about “virtual reality” and the idea that technology is a normal extension of adolescence and a new avenue for teens to “try on” personalities.

<http://www.cmch.tv/news/news.asp?id=260>

#### **Media Literacy Can Help Prevent Teen Smoking**

<http://www.cmch.tv/news/news.asp?id=214>

#### **First-Run Smoking Presentations in U.S. Movies 1999-2006**

(Jonathan R. Polansky, Stanton Glantz, PhD, April 2007)

This is a scholarly and well researched article that found “The greater teens’ exposure to smoking in the movies, the more likely they are to start smoking.”

<http://repositories.cdlib.org/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1069&context=ctcre>

#### **Surgeon General’s Reports**

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention keeps current statistics, data and surveys regarding smoking and tobacco use among all populations.

[http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data\\_statistics/sgr/index.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/sgr/index.htm)

#### **Kaiser Family Foundation Entertainment Media Studies**

The foundation conducts ongoing research. The 3 following reports were used in this toolkit.

- New Study Finds the Food is the Top Product Seen Advertised by Children, 2007
- The Teen Media Juggling Act: The Implications of Media Multitasking Among American Youth, December 2006
- Forum on The “Reality” of Health: Reality Television and the Public Health, October, 2006

<http://www.kff.org/entmedia/index.cfm>

## COPYRIGHT INFORMATION

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### Library of Congress Copyright Office

This is a helpful site where you learn how to protect your creative work or whether the work or publications of others is accessible. There is a well done animated cartoon that “takes the Mystery” out of copyright and could make for a great classroom lesson in itself.

[www.copyright.gov](http://www.copyright.gov)

## DEFINITIONS

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### Media Literacy Glossary of Terms

<http://www.pbs.org/weta/myjourneyhome/teachers/glossary.html>

## DOWNLOADABLE ADVERTISEMENTS

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Note to Presenters: As with any advertising or media materials, please preview before showing to students.

### Tobacco Advertising Gallery from the Campaign for Tobacco- Free Kids

<http://tobaccofreekids.org/adgallery/>

### Trinkets & Trash

Artifacts of tobacco industry marketing

<http://www.trinketsandtrash.org/>

### New Mexico Media Literacy Project/ Deconstruction Gallery

[http://www.nmmip.org/media\\_literacy/deconstruction\\_gallery.html](http://www.nmmip.org/media_literacy/deconstruction_gallery.html)

### Advertising Avenue

Free archive of television commercials for content for advertising analysis.

<http://www.advertisementave.com/>

### The Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth (CAMY)

<http://camy.org/gallery/>

### About Face

Investigate stereotypes of women found in advertising through galleries of print ads, statistics and activism campaigns. *Note: Be sure to preview gallery content before classroom use.*

<http://www.about-face.org/>

### Ad Flips

Archive of “classic” print ads.

<http://www.adflip.com/>

### Adbusters Spoof Ads

Spoofs of popular ads for Tobacco, Alcohol, Food and Fashion.

<http://adbusters.org/spoofads/tobacco/>

## MEDIA LITERACY INFORMATION

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### **Alliance for a Media Literate America (AMLA)**

AMLA is the national membership organization for media literacy. Every year they sponsor the National Media Education Conference on specific themes.

<http://www.AMLAinfo.org>

### **Center for Media Literacy**

This organization has been one of a few that has set the benchmark for media literacy education. The Media Lit Kit is a great resource for media educators. It covers the definitions, background and execution of media literacy in the classroom and community.

<http://www.medialit.org>

### **New Mexico Media Literacy Project**

NMMLP provides current samples of Ads for deconstruction as well as all the basics of media literacy education.

<http://www.nmmlp.org/>

### **Media Awareness Network**

There are numerous tools and resources on this Canadian site including definitions, articles, fact sheets, lesson plans, media literacy basics and a great deal more.

<http://www.media-awareness.ca/english/index.cfm>

### **Center on Media and Child Health**

A well respected site from *Children's Hospital Boston, Harvard Medical School* and *Harvard School of Public Health*. The center conducts research and projects aimed at understanding the implications of media on the health of children. There are resources for teachers, parents and researchers including an elaborate library of expert articles.

<http://www.cmch.tv/>

### **Media Matters**

Media Matters is a national public education campaign of the *American Academy of Pediatrics*. It was launched in 1997 to help pediatricians, parents, and children become more aware of the influence that media has on child and adolescent health. Issues of concern include the use of tobacco, alcohol and other drugs; aggression and violence; sex and sexual exploitation; obesity and poor nutrition. Media Matters advocates for media education, or learning how to analyze the media through critical thinking and viewing, as a way to mitigate these problems.

<http://www.aap.org/advocacy/mediamatters.htm>

### **Just Think**

*Just Think*, a San Francisco-based nonprofit, creates engaging media literacy projects and lessons. This site offers some interesting activity ideas. This organization works with students, teachers and parents with the aim to empower young people to lead healthy, responsible, independent lives in a media saturated culture. Just Think also develops and delivers media education.

<http://www.justthink.org/>

### **Teen Health and the Media**

This site is focused on using media literacy as a health prevention strategy. Some of the activities may already be familiar, but there are many great ideas with a teen focus.

<http://depts.washington.edu/thmedia/>

**Media Education Foundation**

A great resource for educational videos, including many with a health and media literacy focus.

<http://www.mediaed.org/>

**Media Literacy Clearinghouse**

For all things media check out this one stop shop for media educators. From definitions to current media news, specialized topics like health prevention, ideas for integrating media literacy into the classroom and ways for students to get involved this site is a great resource.

<http://www.frankwbaker.com/>

**MediaWise**

This site from the *National Institute on Media and the Family* offers fact sheets on dozens of media-related issues, as well as research studies, monthly columns and media content reviews.

[www.mediafamily.org](http://www.mediafamily.org)

**Action Coalition for Media Education (ACME)**

The ACME website describes itself as “an emerging global coalition run by and for media educators”. The site is rich with many useful links to independent news, educational materials, thoughtful free lesson ideas and plans, blogs and videos and much more.

<http://www.acmecoalition.org/home>

**ONLINE VIDEO & PODCASTS**

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**120,000 Lives**

This video provides an introduction to the problem of smoking in the movies. In only 9 minutes you get the history and issues around smoking in the movies. Done in an edgy style with facts, as well as ways for youth to get involved and call to action.

[http://smokefreemovies.ucsf.edu/actnow/organizing\\_tools.html](http://smokefreemovies.ucsf.edu/actnow/organizing_tools.html)

**The Merchants of Cool – PBS Frontline**

This 53-minute documentary examines the world of popular culture and its number one target, teens. Understanding how to market to teens has become big business, and this documentary provides a behind the scenes look at the techniques and lengths that companies go to.

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/cool/>

**“The Persuaders”- PBS Frontline**

This 90-minute documentary is about the numerous people involved in creating messages and highlights the strategies and lengths they will go, to gain the attention of consumers. The program can be viewed online in segments or as a whole. DVD or VHS versions can be purchased.

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/persuaders/view/>

**Tobacco in Movies and Impact on Youth (India)**

This 32-minute documentary is about Tobacco in Indian Movies. Supported by World Health Organization and the Indian Ministry of Health.

<http://www.burningbrain.org/tobaccoinmovies/>

**The Whole World is Watching**

Youth from around the world give their opinions on smoking in American movies.

[http://smokefreemovies.ucsf.edu/actnow/organizing\\_tools.html](http://smokefreemovies.ucsf.edu/actnow/organizing_tools.html)

## RESEARCH & FACT SHEETS

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The following sites offer reliable, expert and current research.

### **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**

<http://www.cdc.gov/>

#### **Smoking and Tobacco Fact Sheets from the Centers for Disease Control**

[http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data\\_statistics/Factsheets/index.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/Factsheets/index.htm)

### **Center for Tobacco Control Research and education**

<http://repositories.cdlib.org/ctcre/>

### **The Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth**

<http://camy.org/>

### **Global Youth and Tobacco**

<http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/global/GYTS/factsheets/afro/factsheets.htm>

### **Kaiser Family Foundation**

<http://www.kff.org/>

### **Surgeon General's Reports**

[http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data\\_statistics/sgr/index.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/sgr/index.htm)

### **Tobacco Control Journal**

The Vermont Department of Health archives this journal. If you find an article from the past two years that you would like please send a request with the title, author, journal volume and date to

[tobaccovt@vdh.state.vt.us](mailto:tobaccovt@vdh.state.vt.us)

<http://tobaccocontrol.bmj.com/>

### **Tobacco Free Kids**

<http://www.tobaccofreekids.org>

Smoking & Kids – <http://tobaccofreekids.org/research/factsheets/pdf/0001.pdf>

Tobacco Use Among Youth – <http://tobaccofreekids.org/research/factsheets/pdf/0002.pdf>

How Parents Can Protect Their Kids from Becoming Addicted Smokers –

<http://tobaccofreekids.org/research/factsheets/pdf/0152.pdf>

## TEACHING RESOURCES

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### **The New York Times Daily Lesson**

Excellent source for grades 3-12 media literacy production lessons. Each lesson is accompanied by follow-up questions, interdisciplinary connections, assessment techniques, related web links, and academic content standards.

<http://www.nytimes.com/learning/teachers/lessons/index.html>

### **PBS Teacher's Media Literacy Quiz**

An eye-opening media literacy quiz dealing with youth media habits, and statistics related to media consumption.

[http://www.pbs.org/teachers/media\\_lit/quiz.html](http://www.pbs.org/teachers/media_lit/quiz.html)

## TOBACCO-RELATED INFORMATION

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### **American Legacy Foundation**

The Foundation was established as one condition of the 1998 Master Settlement Agreement. The site offers an extensive list of resources for historical, cessation, research, media and education regarding tobacco.

<http://www.americanlegacy.org/>

### **Whudafxup**

This is The American Legacy Foundation's edgy youth prevention campaign (TRUTH). Check here for facts, downloads, posters and videos and games.

<http://www.whudafxup.com/>

### **Smokefree Movies**

This is a great site for current research on the implications of smoking and tobacco depictions in the movies. In addition to the research describing the problem you will find resources to track which movies contain smoking, links to pod casts, like 120,000 Lives, and solutions and counter-ads.

<http://smokefreemovies.ucsf.edu/>

### **Campaign for Tobacco free Kids**

Great place to gather current information on tobacco related news, fact sheets, research and counter marketing initiatives around the country.

<http://www.tobaccofreekids.org/>

### **Tobacco.org**

Tobacco.org offers a large web collection for tobacco news and information from around the world.

<http://www.tobacco.org/>

### **Media Campaign Resource Center (MCRC) – Resources for Teachers**

The MCRC is run by the CDC, and they catalog thousands of anti-smoking advertisements from across the US. The Teacher's Resource provides free ads and other materials for educators.

[http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/media\\_communications/countermarketing/mcrc/teachers.htm#ads](http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/media_communications/countermarketing/mcrc/teachers.htm#ads)

### **International Resource Center/Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids**

This site draws attention to smoking as a global health crisis and offers numerous resources to learn more about tobacco and smoking around the world, as well as current initiatives underway.

<http://tobaccofreecenter.org/>



## VERMONT SITES

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### **8outof10**

Vermont's campaign to correct the misperception that most teens smoke, when in fact more than 8 out of 10 teens don't smoke.

[www.8outof10.com](http://www.8outof10.com)

### **Coalition for a Tobacco Free Vermont**

<http://www.tobaccofreevermont.org/>

### **Office of the Attorney General**

[www.atg.state.vt.us](http://www.atg.state.vt.us)

### **Our Voices Xposed (OVX)**

OVX is a youth led movement focused on exposing the truth about tobacco. OVX Studios is an interactive animated tool that lets you try your hand at directing and learn a little about product placement in the process.

[www.ovx.org](http://www.ovx.org)

### **Vermont Department of Education**

<http://education.vermont.gov/>

### **Vermont Department of Health**

<http://healthvermont.gov/>

### **Vermont Department of Liquor Control**

[www.state.vt.us/dlc](http://www.state.vt.us/dlc)

### **Vermont Kids Against Tobacco (VKAT)**

VKAT is a peer led group for youth in grades 5-8 that helps educate about healthful choices like not smoking.

[www.goVKAT.org](http://www.goVKAT.org)

### **Vermont Tobacco Evaluation& Review Board**

[www.humanservices.gov/tobacco](http://www.humanservices.gov/tobacco)



## Resources: DVDs & VHS

Using videos and other visually engaging materials in the classroom can offer a stimulating classroom experience, but remember to include teaching about media and not let the video stand in as a solo teaching tool. You can request the following DVD's for a 2-week loan by e-mailing [tobaccovt@vdh.state.vt.us](mailto:tobaccovt@vdh.state.vt.us)

### **Analyzing Media Influences** (30 Minutes, 2006)

This DVD offers a current look at how advertising can manipulate teen's perception. The DVD offers numerous media examples and presents viewers with ways to sift through messages to make healthy decisions.

### **Deadly Persuasion: The Advertising of Alcohol and Tobacco** (60 Minutes 2003)

Marketing and advertising strategies are driven by the psychology of addiction. This DVD critically discusses these two industries and the psychology they use to sell products that kill 450,000 per year. For high school students.

### **The Insider** (1999)

An account of corporate/media censorship, loosely based on the events surrounding tobacco executive Jeffrey Wigand's whistle blowing, with the help of Sixty Minutes producer Lowell Bergman. Rent at any video store!

### **Scene Smoking: Cigarettes, Cinema & the Myth of Cool** (60 Minutes 2003)

Several professionals weigh-in on the subject of tobacco as depicted on screen. It is intended for a high school audience and will provide for a lively debate after viewing.

[http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/youth/educational\\_materials/videos\\_dvds/media\\_literacy/00\\_pdfs/HS\\_Guide.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/youth/educational_materials/videos_dvds/media_literacy/00_pdfs/HS_Guide.pdf)

### **Spin the Bottle", Sex, Lies & Alcohol** (45 Minutes 2004)

Decode the glamour that media uses around alcohol and youth. Examines how media influences drinking behaviors.

### **"Something Stinks in Hollywood"** (2005)

This is a very usable classroom or community resource created by Smoke Free Movies and The New Mexico Media Literacy Project. Something Stinks in Hollywood is a thoughtful and eye opening look into smoking in the movies and the tobacco industry and Hollywood's involvement and responsibility. Quoted from the Smoke-Free Movies web site: "Menu-driven DVD includes fifty smoking scenes from recent movies organized by theme; printable discussion guide; background information about smoking in movies and its impact; and ideas students can use to end smoking in youth-rated movies. Designed for the classroom, movie samples and graphic charts are provocative for any audience exploring the power of tobacco imagery"

### **Understanding Media Literacy** (35 Minutes, 2007)

This is a good intro to learning critical thinking and media literacy skills for teens. It covers product placement, interpreting messages, questioning media and advertising strategies and more.

## **Appendix: Handouts, Fact Sheets & Lessons**



The following handouts are available in this appendix:

- Youth Media Diet Facts
- Question Media
- Product Placement Log
- What are your Values?
- Just the Facts – Smoking in the Movies
- Creative Brief
- “Some Things Just Aren’t What They Seem” Lesson Plan

Additional handouts and materials can be found online. See the Web Links Resources section.

## Youth Media Diet Facts

- 8-18 Year olds are often called Generation M for Media.<sup>1</sup>
- Teens spend nearly 6 1/2 hours a day committed to media (TV, radio, computer, MP3, magazines, newspapers).<sup>1</sup>
- Teens spend a little more than 2 hours a day hanging out with parents.<sup>1</sup>
- The typical teen's home contains at least 3 TV's and 24% live in homes with 5 or more TV's.<sup>1</sup>
- TV is the number one type of media used by teens, who watch more than 3 hours a day (including videos).<sup>1</sup>
- 63% of youth live in homes where the TV is on during meals.<sup>1</sup>
- 68% of 8-18 year-olds have a TV in their bedroom.<sup>1</sup>
- 84% of High school students in Vermont report that when they watch TV or go to the movies they see actors smoking most or some of the time.<sup>2</sup>
- Teenagers see an average of 17 food ads a day on TV, which is more than 6,000 a year or over 40 hours of food advertising. And, of those ads most were for candy, snacks, cereal or fast food.<sup>3</sup>
- 13-17 year-olds see less than one PSA about fitness or nutrition a week.<sup>3</sup>
- The top messages that food advertisers use to attract teenagers to a particular food or beverage product;<sup>3</sup>
  - Taste
  - Fun
  - Free items, contests
  - New and different
- Half of all 8-18 year-olds say they have looked for health information online.<sup>4</sup>
- Young people multitask more when they're instant messaging, surfing the internet or playing a video game and seldom do when watching TV.<sup>4</sup>

Many of these reports and facts can be found on the Kaiser Family Foundation web site at <http://www.kff.org>

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<sup>1</sup> Generation M: Media in the Lives of 8-18 Year-olds, March 2005

<sup>2</sup> Vermont Youth Health Survey, 2006

<sup>3</sup> Food for Thought: Television Food Advertising to Children in the United States, March 2007

<sup>4</sup> Media Multitasking Among American Youth: Prevalence, Predictors and Pairings, December 2006

## **Question Media**

### **Be In Control Of What Goes Into Your Head!**

#### **Media is constructed**

A team of people creates media. Some of the positions include – directors, producers, writers, set designers, prop masters, publicists, photographers and art directors as well as many assistants.

#### **Each media form is constructed using specific creative language**

Movies, TV and magazines (and other media) use unique ways to create a message for a specific audience. Some techniques include: sound effects, music, camera angles, colors, words, lighting, editing, dramatic graphics, etc.

#### **Media messages affect our thoughts and actions**

Media is created to bring out an emotional response like fear, anger, love, longing, excitement, etc.

#### **People experience messages differently**

People translate messages based on their own culture, family and personal beliefs and values, lifestyles, interests and experiences.

#### **Media messages have their own values and points of view**

Messages are created to influence the audience to accept or understand a particular viewpoint. Usually, the “whole story” is not reflected. People can choose to accept or reject the values promoted in a message.

#### **Begin Questioning**

The following questions are based on the ideas listed above. They are the basic tools for exploring and understanding the impact that media plays in our lives.

Who created this message? Why? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Who is the target audience? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What creative language is used to attract my attention? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

How does this message make me feel? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

How might different people understand this message differently from me? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What values, lifestyles and points of view are represented in, or left out, of the message? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Source: The Center for Media Literacy [www.medialit.org](http://www.medialit.org).

## Product Placement Log

How many brand named products show up in your favorite movies or TV shows? Do you remember when you see someone smoking or if tobacco brands are displayed? You might be surprised at how many products *seem* to slip by us in a scene, and that's exactly what makes product placement so successful – it is subtle and fits naturally into TV and movie scenes.

Choose a favorite movie or TV program and see if you can list all the products you see either in the background, or that a character uses. Don't forget to note if you see smoking or a tobacco brand (or drinking and a beer/liquor brand).

Name of TV Show or Movie \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Product (Brand) Names (list all)

_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Characters Shown Smoking (or shown drinking) – circle number of characters  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Total Number of Times Smoking (or drinking) is Shown \_\_\_\_\_

Tobacco (Beer or Liquor) Brands Shown (list)

_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
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## **Values: An Idea or Attitude you find important and worthwhile**

Acceptance	Economy	Obedience
Accomplishment	Education	Neatness
Achievement	Excitement	Mysteriousness
Activeness	Enjoyment	Organization
Adventure	Entertainment	Originality
Affection	Experience	Playfulness
Ambition	Energy	Pleasure
Amusement	Excellence	Perseverance
Aggressiveness	Enthusiasm	Persistence
Attractiveness	Expertise	Popularity
Balance	Exploration	Power
Beauty	Daring	Practicality
Being the Best	Extravagance	Preparedness
Belonging	Fairness	Recreation
Boldness	Faith	Relaxation
Bravery	Fame	Reliability
Calmness	Fashion	Respect
Capability	Fearlessness	Richness
Celebrity	Financial Independence	Recognition
Challenge	Fitness	Satisfaction
Cheerfulness	Focus	Security
Cleverness	Freedom	Self-reliance
Comfort	Fun	Service
Commitment	Friendliness	Sexuality
Compassion	Giving	Sharing
Confidence	Generosity	Silence
Completion	Happiness	Silliness
Concentration	Health	Simplicity
Cleanliness	Honesty	Speed
Conformity	Humor	Spontaneity
Connection	Imagination	Strength
Control	Hygiene	Surprise
Coolness	Independence	Sympathy
Courage	Inspiration	Teamwork
Creativity	Integrity	Tidiness
Cruelty	Intelligence	Trust
Curiosity	Inventiveness	Trustworthiness
Dependability	Joy	Truth
Discovery	Justice	Understanding
Desire	Kindness	Uniqueness
Determination	Knowledge	Usefulness
Diversity	Leadership	Vanity
Discipline	Love	Variety
Dreaming	Perfection	Wealth
Drive	Motivation	Wisdom
Duty	Order	Youthfulness

## Just the Facts – Smoking in the Movies

- Tobacco appears in nearly 4 out of 5 movies made today.
- Every day 1,070 teens will try their first cigarette because of seeing smoking in the movies.
- Smoking in the movies is more powerful than cigarette advertising. And, tobacco companies know it...

*"We believe that most of the strong, positive images for cigarettes and smoking are created by cinema and television."*

Philip Morris marketing plan, 1989

*"Film placement of RJR brands will create favorable imagery... as advertising restrictions intensify."*

Agreement between RJR (maker of Camels) and its PR firm.

- There is more smoking and smoking products shown in movies now than before the 1998 Master Settlement Agreement that banned tobacco product placement in the movies.
- 84% of High school students in Vermont report that when they watch TV or go to the movies they see actors smoking most or some of the time.
- Nonsmoking teens whose favorite stars smoke frequently on screen are sixteen times more likely to have positive attitudes about smoking in the future.
- Seeing smoking in the movies is responsible for recruiting 52% of the youth who start smoking every year.
- Movies make smoking normal and glamorous by showing mostly healthy, attractive, athletic, successful and wealthy characters smoking.  
*In the real world smoking kills smokers.*  
*In the real world second-hand smoke kills non-smokers.*



## **Creative Brief**

### **Target Audience(s)**

Describe the person that you want to reach with your communication. What do they value? How do they see themselves? What are their aspirations? Include a primary and secondary (influencer) audience if appropriate. Include any relevant audience research.

### **Objective(s)**

What do you want your target audience to think, feel, or do after experiencing the communication?

### **Obstacles**

What beliefs, cultural practices, pressure, misinformation, etc. stand between you and your audience, and the desired behavior? Is there other competition?

### **Key Promise**

Select one single benefit that will outweigh the obstacles in the mind of your target audience. Suggested format: If I (desired behavior), then (immediate benefit).

### **Support Statements**

This is the substantiation for the key promise; the reason why the promise is true. Oftentimes, this will begin with a "because."

### **Tone**

What feeling should your communication have? Should it be authoritative, humorous, emotional, etc?

### **Communication Channels**

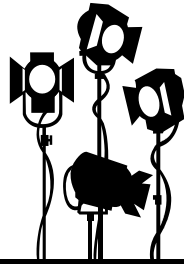
What channel(s) will you employ for the communication? What is the best fit the target audience? (TV spots, radio spots, print ads, point-of-Purchase (service) materials, promotional giveaways, earned media (PR), interpersonal, community mobilization meetings, grassroots events, non-traditional media, etc.)

### **Openings**

What opportunities (times and places) exist for reaching your audience? When is your audience most open to getting your message? Examples: World AIDS Day, Mothers Day, New Years Eve, etc.

### **Creative Considerations**

Are there any other critical information for the writers and designers? Will the communication be in more than one language or dialect? Should it be tailored to a low-literacy audience? Are there any political considerations? Any red flags/words or visuals to stay away from? Should there be space or time available to include local contact information?



# **MEDIA REVEALED**

**“Some Things Just Aren’t What They Seem”**

## **Lesson Plan**



# **“Some Things Just Aren’t What They Seem”**

## **LESSON PLAN**

### **Overview**

This Lesson plan was created using an activity from the “Retouching Reality” section beginning on page 10 in *Media Revealed; Understanding our Media Diet* guide.

It’s hard to know what’s real anymore because media messages are constructed using specific techniques like camera angles, lighting, editing and special effects that may cover-up reality. In the same way that media can alter our perceptions of reality, the illusions around teen smoking can promote the misperception that most Vermont high school students smoke, compared with the reality that 8 out of 10 Vermont teens don’t smoke. Media and the messages conveyed within create false impressions that influence our thinking and behaviors.



*Note to Presenters/Educators: You can find several sources to introduce you to Media Literacy under Presenter Basics on pg.4 of the Media Revealed tool kit.*

### **Subject**

Misperceptions; Perceived reality influences behavior.

### **Age**

10-13

### **Focus**

Deconstruction (Discussed on pages 10-11 in *Media Revealed*)

Deconstruction activities teach a set of questions to ask as a way to explore media. In dissecting media, the discovery of how reality has been retouched is discovered. Emphasis is on core questions like:

- How is media constructed?
- What creative techniques are used to attract my attention?
- Who created the message?

### **Rationale**

Media literacy offers youth critical thinking skills that can help them make more informed decisions about health behaviors like not smoking and drinking.

**Learning Objectives** (Taken from “Why Media Literacy” page 1, *Media Revealed*)

- Challenge misperceptions
- Develop critical thinking skills – active instead of passive media skills

### **Time**

20-30 Minutes



### Handout/Giveaway

- Question Media: Be In Control of What Goes into Your Head (found in the Appendix- Media Revealed and the last page of this lesson plan).
- 8 Dollar Bill – this fun item looks a lot like a real dollar bill, but it can help reinforce that some things aren't what they seem. Hand out to everyone who takes part.

### Equipment

- Computer
- Youtube Video Campaign for Real Beauty (link below)  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fZoyfhG0Wwk>

## Activity – Video & Discussion

The lesson that follows is a great way to introduce a deconstruction activity. Students will be introduced to a short video that deconstructs some of the creative techniques used in media messages, which can have an influence on perception and behavior.

### Step 1 – Group Discussion

Open with a discussion that will challenge students to start questioning the impact of media in their lives, to increase awareness and make a connection between what they see and how they think, feel and behave.

1. Have you purchased something because you saw it in a magazine, movie or on TV?  
Why or Why Not?
2. How do you choose what to buy? Where does the idea come from?
3. Could you pick out a photo that is real or retouched? What could give it away?

*Most advertising photos have been retouched and it's almost impossible to know exactly what has been altered. However, in reality if you compare the differences between how people or things look in everyday life, the imperfections and unique qualities can become apparent.*

### Step 2 – “Evolution of Beauty” (Campaign for Real Beauty) Video Activity

Play the video. (Just over 1 minute) It may need to be played 2-3 times to start to identify all the creative techniques used to change the appearance of the model. Ask the students to list all the changes as they see on a piece of paper.



### Step 3 – Making the Link, Misperceptions and Smoking

After the video use the following questions to help guide a deeper discussion about misperceptions and how they might influence choices made.

1. What are the changes done to the model? What do you see happening? How many of the changes were done electronically using Photoshop?

*Changes include; artificial lighting, makeup applied, blemishes covered, hair curled and styled, artificial wind blown hair effect, hair color was changed to be more reddish and highlighted, eyes enlarged, neck sculpted, eyebrows shaped, hair made to look fuller, forehead and face slimmed and lips enlarged*

2. Would you recognize the model on the street, after all the changes were made?
3. How much retouching and/or improvements do you think occur in other media, like commercials, magazines or TV shows? Think about the food you see?
4. Did it surprise you to see how much went into creating this ad?
5. What are some other ways that companies can change people's perceptions or what they think?

*For example, the number of times an ad is seen, the wording used product placement (into shows and movies), etc.*

6. Our opinion of beauty may be altered by creative techniques. Can our opinion of smoking also be changed by what we see and hear? Positively? Negatively?  
*For example, classes about the health effects of smoking might influence to have a negative opinion about smoking, but what might influence positive opinions or misperceptions?*
7. Does it surprise you to learn that 8 out of 10 Vermont youth don't smoke? (The rate of smoking among teens, 8<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grade, is 16%.)
8. How do you think tobacco companies and other industries (like the media) influence the misperception that more teens smoke than they really do? Brainstorm a list or discuss.

**Want More?** Use the **Be In Control of What Goes Into Your Head!** handout at home.

## **Question Media**

### **Be In Control Of What Goes Into Your Head!**

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\_\_\_\_\_

Who is the target audience? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What creative language is used to attract my attention? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

How does this message make me feel? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

How might different people understand this message differently from me? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What values, lifestyles and points of view are represented in, or left out, of the message? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_